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THROWING 'SHADE'

Marlon Wayans takes on a smutty hit with "Fifty Shades of Black." Thing is, he doesn't even hate the movie. 13

OPEN ROAD FILMS

ZIKA COULD AFFECT 4M

1 The Zika virus — linked to severe birth defects in thousands of babies in Brazil — is spreading "explosively" and could affect as many as 4 million people in the Americas, the World Health Organization said. Director-General Margaret Chan told members of WHO's executive board the spread of the mosquito-borne disease had gone from a mild threat to one of alarming proportions. REUTERS

6 DEAD IN VIRGINIA

2 A Virginia family of six is dead in an apparent murder-suicide after an hours-long standoff with police ended early Thursday, officials said. Police in Chesapeake, Virginia, about 200 miles south of Washington, found five bodies, including the suspected gunman, inside a home shortly after 2 a.m., Chesapeake police said. The incident began when officers were called to check on a different house Wednesday afternoon and discovered a dead body. REUTERS

$38B MARKET VALUE

3 Facebook's market value soared to $38 billion in morning trading Thursday, vaulting the company ahead of Amazon after the social network's quarterly results blew away expectations on every key measure. Facebook's stock jumped more than 15 percent to $107.95 after the company reported a blockbuster quarter Wednesday. REUTERS

RIBBON CUTTING

7 Big Brothers and Big Sisters of New York City holds a press conference in Jackson Heights, Queens, Thursday afternoon celebrating its new office space which will allow the organization to be more effective in recruiting new volunteers. Big brother Mark Zustovich, Queens Big of the Year (right), helps his little brother, 14 year-old Spencer, cut the ribbon, marking the event.

7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

MAIN PHOTO BY HANNAH MATTIX, ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

$1K IN COLD MEDS STOLEN

4 Police are looking for three men they said fled with over $1,000 in medicine from a drug store in the Bronx. On Dec. 20 at about 4:10 p.m., the three suspects entered the CVS pharmacy at 3125 Bainbridge Avenue, and removed about $1,062 worth of cold medicine products, according to authorities. ANGY ALTAMIRANO

DISNEYLAND PARIS GUNS

5 A man carrying two handguns and a copy of the Quran was arrested at the Disneyland Paris amusement park outside Paris on Thursday, French officials said. France remains in a state of emergency after Islamist gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in a series of jihadist attacks in and around Paris in November last year. A police source said the 28-year-old man of European origin arrested at Disneyland had been carrying the guns, one of them an automatic handgun, concealed in a bag with the religious text. REUTERS

CHRIS CHRISTIE MOPS

6 Although the snow from Jonas is just starting to finish its final phase of melting, many New Jerseyans remain as ice cold as ever against their governor. So cold is their grudge against the governor for his lack of action during the storm and its subsequent flooding, that there is a GoFundMe campaign to send mops to Chris Christie. MATT LEE

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MDA returns to city with new goals

Joe Akmakjian defied odds and celebrated his 24th birthday by skydiving. MDA

The muscular dystrophy nonprofit plans to reach out to a new generation while continuing on its mission to serve families.

ANGY ALTAMIRANO
@MetroNewYork
letters@metro.us

The Muscular Dystrophy Association is coming back to its roots to launch a new era for the organization, while continuing strong on the main focus of its mission: the families they serve.

Last year, the MDA announced that it would discontinue production of its broadcast telethon — which for years was emceed by Jerry Lewis and raised awareness and brought in donations for children and adults fighting muscular dystrophy, ALS and other life-threatening diseases. And for a while the question hung in the air on how the organization would move forward.

However, on Friday the MDA will announce to families and supporters that it is here with a new look, new campaign and big news — all based on listening to the families it has served for decades.

One of the biggest changes will be the organization's outreach with its families and the public. There will no longer be broadcast telethons, because instead, the MDA hopes to strengthen its digital presence and reach a new generation — which includes the children it has helped, who are now stronger and older thanks to advanced medicine.

To start off this new approach, MDA will livestream Friday's announcement via its website at MDA.org.

"We needed to make an important change to pivot a new way to connect with Americans and connect with a new generation of supporters," said Steve Ford, MDA executive vice president and chief marketing officer.

To make the announcement — which will be made at an event for families and supporters — MDA decided to return to Carnegie Hall in New York City where in 1956 it held its first telethon.

MDA also plans to unveil a new logo with a heart in the center of its letters capturing the emphasis of the families the organization serves and also the generosity of everyone who has supported and donated to the MDA.

"This whole movement is inspired by our families," Ford said. "Families are our champion and we want to put them center stage [Friday]."

The organization will also introduce its five-year plan to find treatments and cures for muscular dystrophy, ALS and related diseases — all which Ford said limit people's ability to move and take away their strength.

Friday's event will also launch a new look for its website, which will feature a communication form for families and also a blog where families can share their stories.

MDA expects to introduce its new National Goodwill Ambassador — and first young adult to be the national face of the organization in over five decades — Joe Akmakjian from Colorado, who was diagnosed with spinal muscular dystrophy.

Joe Akmakjian will be the first young adult to be MDA's national face in over five decades.

Although doctors only gave Akmakjian a life expectancy of a 12-year-old, last year he celebrated his 24th birthday by skydiving.

"I think it's a perfect time to come into this organization and be part of this great change that is about to happen," Akmakjian said. "Its always been my dream to speak about the realities of living with muscular dystrophy, and I am excited to get to do that on a large platform."

The 24-year-old added that he plans to speak with families and MDA supporters, and share his story on how the organization was there for him his entire life.

And after years of always dreaming of traveling to New York City, Akmakjian said he never had a good reason — until now.

"It feels like this is the perfect reason to be here and it feels like this is why I was supposed to come," he said. "And I really can't believe that I am here."

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BRIEF

Brother sentenced in Queens gunpoint sex-trafficking case
Two brothers have been sentenced to prison after pleading guilty to various charges related to a gunpoint sex-trafficking case centered in Queens.

Evan Hernandez, 25, and his brother Richard Hernandez, 27, forced a 25-year-old woman into prostitution after they "bought" her for $200 at the Queens Motor Inn in Woodside, District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, adding that the brothers have now received indeterminate prison sentences ranging from three to nine years based on prostitution and sex-trafficking convictions.

"The sentences imposed by the court punish both defendants for their actions and send a clear message that crimes such as these will not be tolerated in Queens County," Brown was quoted in the official statement.

Evan Hernandez was introduced to the victim in April 2014 by a woman he claimed "sold" the victim to him for $200 to work as a prostitute, which he forced her to do over the next five days at the Motor Inn.

Holding a gun to the victim's head, Evan Hernandez forced her to have sex with him and his brother and to perform oral sex on him, the district attorney said.

She was also forced to prostitute herself to numerous men and turn the money over to the Hernandez brothers. There was an advertisement with her picture placed on Backpage.com.

The victim eventually managed to use a client's phone to call her mother, who called 911 and gave police the victim's location, the DA reported.

JASON NUCKOLLS

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Officials say a pregnant New Yorker has tested positive for Zika. GETTY IMAGES

Pregnant New Yorker positive for Zika virus

The virus is known to cause birth defects, including microcephaly – atypical smallness of the human head.

Concerns over the mosquito-borne Zika virus continue to mount as city health officials say a pregnant New Yorker has tested positive for the disease.

NBC New York reported the woman, who was recently traveling, brings the number of residents stricken with the virus to three. However, experts cautioned against alarm — there is scant risk of the virus being transmitted in New York, as mosquitoes aren't active in the winter.

At a press conference, New York City Commissioner of Health Mary Bassett said that, typically, OB/GYNs can monitor and see whether or not Zika is affecting fetuses in the first trimester of pregnancy. Bassett added that doctors look for signs of rapid growth in the head and brain.

"There is no rapid test" for the virus, Bassett said, urging physicians to be aware of individuals who have been traveling and say they are experiencing symptoms. And, if they encounter patients who may have been exposed, to gather samples from those patients and alert health officials.

Some of those symptoms include acute onset of fever; a red rash or rashes of small bumps appearing on skin; conjunctivitis, known colloquially as "pink eye"; or joint pain, according to the Centers for the Disease Control and Prevention.

The virus is known to cause birth defects, including microcephaly — atypical smallness of the human head.

The CDC dispatched a bulletin earlier this month reporting that, as of Jan. 15, 2016, 14 countries or territories in the Americas, including Puetro Rico, had documented local transmission of Zika.

JOSH KRUGER

By the numbers

The World Health Organization (WHO) said Thursday the Zika virus, linked to severe birth defects in thousands of babies in Brazil, is "spreading explosively" and may infect 3 million to 4 million people in the Americas, including 1.5 million in Brazil.

NYC man guilty in Super Bowl sex ring

A Manhattan man was found guilty Wednesday of operating a sex trafficking and prostitution ring — which included a 15-year-old girl — during Super Bowl weekend in 2014.

Damon Hayes, 45, was charged with sex trafficking, promoting prostitution and endangering the welfare of a child.

According to prosecutors, in January of 2014 Hayes — who was a Manhattan resident — recruited two women and a teenage girl from Florida to work for him as prostitutes in Midtown Manhattan. Among the women were 41-year-old Yolonda Ostoloza and her 15-year-old daughter.

On Jan. 27, 2014, Hayes flew to Florida to meet with the women and paid for plane tickets for them to fly to New York the next day, authorities said. Hayes then posted ads with their photos on Backpage.com, and arranged for them to meet with clients. The women were required to hand over all of the money they earned.

The sex ring took place during Super Bowl XLVIII. GETTY IMAGES

Hayes also forced the 15-year-old girl to engage in prostitution and would threaten her with physical violence if she did not meet with the client he chose, prosecutors said.

One client turned out to be an undercover NYPD officer, and four months later Hayes was arrested following an investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office's Human Trafficking Response Unit and the NYPD.

"The Super Bowl should not be used as an opportunity to promote illegal sex tourism," said Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. "Damon Hayes was convicted of exploiting a 15-year-old girl — shockingly, with the help of her own mother — and forcing her to earn him money through his trafficking ring. Yet, once again, we see how New York State's sex trafficking laws hamper these prosecutions, and do not adequately protect children from being sold for sex."

The young girl's mother was also convicted on charges of promoting prostitution and endangering the welfare of a child for helping to prostitute her daughter. Ostoloza was sentenced to one to three years in state prison.

Hayes is expected to be sentenced Feb. 16.

ANGY ALTAMIRANO

Weekend Transit Changes
January 29 - February 1
1 South Ferry-bound trains skip Christopher, Houston, Canal and Franklin Sts
2 Flatbush Av-bound trains skip Christopher, Houston, Canal and Franklin Sts
Wakefield-bound trains make local stops at 50, 59, 66, 72, 79 and 86 Sts
3 148 St-bound trains make local stops at 50, 59, 66, 72, 79 and 86 Sts
Service is extended to New Lots Av
4 No trains between Bowling Green and Utica/New Lots Avs
5 Pelham Bay Park-bound trains run express from 3 Av-138 St to Hunts Point Av
A Brooklyn-bound trains skip 50 St, 23 St and Spring St
No trains between Euclid Av and Lefferts Blvd g St
C No trains between 145 St and 168 St
E Jamaica Center-bound trains run express from Queens Plaza to 75 Av
Jamaica Center-bound trains skip 75 Av and Briarwood
World Trade Center-bound trains run local from 71 Av to Queens Plaza
F Jamaica-bound trains skip 75 Av, Briarwood & Sutphin Blvd
M No trains between Myrtle Av and Essex St
N No trains between Kings Hwy and 57 St-7 Av
Q Manhattan-bound trains skip Neck Rd and Avenue U
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Museum Hack takes on King Tut

This weekend, Museum Hack is adding a tour of "The Discovery of King Tut" in Midtown. MARTIN HANGEN

Take a deep dive into the life of Egypt's famous boy ruler on a "reverently irreverent" tour.

EVA KIS
@thisiskis
eva.kis@metro.us

If the exhibits actually have to come alive for a night at the museum to sound like fun to you, then a Museum Hack tour is the next best thing.

"One of our taglines is that 'people have been people for as long as people have been people," says Harry Einhorn, one of the "reverently irreverent" tour guides who turn the usual docent tour into a participatory romp in search of the strange and scandalous details that don't fit on museum plaques. "Our approach is very much based on human stories, the human side of things. We like to tell the story behind the story."

This weekend, Museum Hack is putting its spin on "The Discovery of King Tut" in Midtown, which re-creates three chambers of the boy ruler's 3,000-year-old tomb, along with over 1,000 artifacts found there and rare photos of the 1922 excavation.

The original items are too fragile to travel, so Egyptian artisans created the faithful replicas in the exhibit — which posed a unique opportunity for Museum Hack. "One thing that we actually love, and this isn't advertised, is because they're re-creations — and this is not encouraged — but you are technically allowed to touch the objects," says Einhorn. You certainly can't do that at the Met.

Raps and puns aren't the only unusual elements of Einhorn's take on ancient Egypt's most famous ruler. Some of the tour's highlights include investigating the Mummy's Curse, which is blamed for the mysterious deaths of several excavation team members ("We have a mummy rap — get it?"); a discussion of Egyptian magic (spoiler alert: Most hieroglyphic writing is actually spells!); and the cautionary tale about incest that is King Tut's life. "We also play little games along the way; it's interactive," says Einhorn. And Egyptology fans, don't worry — Museum Hack does their tours with "loving respect."

The Museum Hack experience is suitable for all ages and free with admission to "The Discovery of King Tut," which is open until May 1. Groups are kept fairly small, so arriving early is recommended.

If you go

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WATER BOTTLE DONATIONS WILL NOT SAVE FLINT

Recent celebrity and charity donations of water to help address the crisis in Flint, Michigan, aren't sufficient.

By now, you've probably read stories of celebrities and local heroes donating thousands of bottles of clean water to the residents of Flint.

This comes after the national uproar over the city's roughly 100,000 residents being exposed to lead-contaminated drinking water that has disproportionately infected small children, elders and poor communities.

So as a short-term solution, celebrities such as Cher, Pearl Jam, Puff Daddy, Meek Mill and Mark Wahlberg have donated excessive amounts of bottled water.

Small nonprofit coalitions from Philadelphia to Chicago have also chimed in on the efforts and have gotten great press and social media buzz.

If only it were that simple.

Mathematically speaking, Americans use an average of 50 gallons of water a day for standard household living, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

That would equal about 200 bottles of water per person daily (yes, we use that much water to wash dishes, our bodies, clothes, food and more).

With about 102,000 Flint residents, donating 100,000 bottles (which many celebrities have been doing) would give one resident only enough water to wash his or her face once.

In other words, donating water is a small ripple in a huge sea of problems that begs for our attention and activism.

The first question we should all be asking ourselves is: How in the hell could something like this happen in America? Then we should start focusing on whom should be held accountable.

It's no surprise that this would have us looking at the governor's mansion. Republican Gov. Rick Snyder has allowed this human rights crisis to go on for two years without taking any executive action.

A national call for his resignation should be pushed for immediately, and those more concerned about the water rather than the politics behind it should reprioritize.

Water-bottle donation is the low-hanging fruit of a larger issue. This isn't temporary devastation caused by a natural disaster — it's the result of gross negligence by public servants.

Most Americans are treating this issue almost as if Flint were a Third World country, far away from us. "Pray for Flint," someone on my Facebook timeline wrote. "Those poor people must be devastated."

Those "poor people" are fellow Americans who are experiencing something that could happen to any of our communities — especially nonaffluent urban communities.

Let's stop subscribing to the pathetic humanitarian/savior belief that positions us above those less fortunate than us.

We are Flint. Flint is a part of our society. Simply donating water bottles and praying is pandering at the most basic level.

We are capable of raising awareness to a higher degree than simply making this a quantifying measure of service.

Stop wasting plastic bottles and start investing your time in getting restorative justice for Flint residents.

ERNEST OWENS

The Ernest Opinion

Award-winning multimedia journalist Ernest Owens is a keen observer of social, LGBT and race issues in Philadelphia. Follow him @MrErnestOwens

GETTY IMAGES

"The first question we should all be asking ourselves is how in the hell could something like this happen in America. Then we should start focusing on those who should be held accountable."

Tremors in Northeast caused by sonic boom, not quake: Agency

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter GETTY IMAGES

People from New Jersey to Connecticut posted on social media and called local police departments to report a series of tremors starting just before 1:30 p.m. on Thursday.

A fighter jet from a U.S. Navy base in Maryland may have caused a series of sonic booms on Thursday near the New Jersey coast that prompted hundreds of residents to report earthquake-like tremors.

A spokeswoman for Naval Air Station Patuxent River said an F-35C was conducting routine flight testing over the Atlantic Ocean on Thursday afternoon that may have created sonic booms.

The U.S. Geological Survey, which monitors earthquake activity, said no quake had struck. The agency reported at least nine sonic booms had been recorded over 90 minutes starting at 1:24 p.m. near Hammonton, New Jersey, about 35 miles southeast of Philadelphia.

768

A SONIC BOOM IS PRODUCED WHEN AN AIRPLANE TRAVELS FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF SOUND, OR 768 MILES PER HOUR.

The sound waves from a sonic boom can hit the Earth and cause shaking, which is sometimes mistaken for an earthquake, according to the USGS.

Two days ago, residents in Charleston, South Carolina, also reported feeling tremors, likely caused by sonic booms from F-18 fighter jets on a training run from a nearby military base, according to media reports.

In New York, seismologists at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University confirmed no earthquake had occurred in the region on Thursday. The observatory measured vibrations and low-frequency sound waves consistent with about eight sonic booms from approximately 1:20 p.m. to 2:40 p.m., said Won-Young Kim, a research professor there.

He said residents on the ground likely would not have heard the booms but would have experienced 15 to 20 seconds of shaking during each one.

The tremors produced numerous emergency calls to local police departments, some of which took to Twitter to ask residents not to flood their lines with more reports.

No serious damage was immediately reported.

Test aircraft from the naval air station fly almost daily along the same route, according to the base's spokeswoman, but most sonic booms are never heard on land. Certain atmospheric conditions, however, can make the sound travel.

Some Twitter users offered a lighthearted response. One person using the handle @VixenRogue quipped: "Aliens are invading New Jersey. What's the best way to let them know the other 49 states are just fine with this?"

REUTERS

BRIEF

US on high alert for bird flu after Indiana poultry outbreak

In the two weeks since bird flu reappeared in Indiana, U.S. veterinarians have swabbed the mouths of chickens and turkeys across the country, racing to uncover any more infections and contain the virus before it causes mass death and damage like last year.

Biologists also are running tests on feces collected from wild birds, which are suspected of spreading the disease to farms.

The Department of Agriculture confirmed Jan. 15 that a turkey flock in Dubois County, Indiana, was infected with the H7N8 strain of the virus. It was the first new case of bird flu in U.S. poultry flocks since June.

More poultry flocks will likely fall ill in the coming months, veterinarians said, following an unprecedented outbreak last year that caused more than 48 million chickens and turkeys to die from sickness or because they had to be culled to contain the disease.

Anxiety over that risk is fueling vigilance among U.S. poultry producers and government officials looking for signs of infections. Increased testing could help limit the spread if new cases are detected quickly.

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Jason Rezaian thanks Kerry in first appearance since release

Rezaian was freed this month in a prisoner swap negotiated between the US and Iran coinciding with the implementation of a deal that curbs Iran's nuclear program, lifting of economic sanctions.

Freed Washington Post Tehran bureau chief Jason Rezaian receives a hug from Secretary of State John Kerry during the inauguration of the Washington Post headquarters on Thursday in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES

Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian thanked Secretary of State John Kerry on Thursday for negotiating his release from an Iranian prison in his first public appearance since leaving Iran nearly two weeks ago.

Rezaian received a standing ovation from foreign dignitaries, journalists and family members at a ceremony for the opening of the Washington Post's new offices in Washington, D.C.

In brief but emotional remarks, he thanked the Washington Post leadership, U.S. officials and his family for advocating on his behalf.

"For much of the 18 months I was in prison, my Iranian interrogators told me that the Washington Post did not exist, that no one knew my plight, and that the United States government would not lift a finger for my release," Rezaian said. "Today I'm here in this room with the very people who helped prove the Iranians wrong in so many ways."

His brother Ali, who had spoken out about his arrest, wife Yeganeh Salehi, also a journalist, and mother Mary, who moved to Iran to be closer to her son, attended, as did Washington Post owner and Amazon.com Inc. founder Jeff Bezos.

Rezaian, who was born in California and holds dual U.S. and Iranian citizenship, was arrested in July 2014 along with Salehi, who is Iranian. She was later freed.

Rezaian's brother and Washington Post executives led the effort to seek his release, urging the Obama administration to press the issue with Iran.

Rezaian highlighted the efforts of Kerry and Brett McGurk, a State Department envoy who conducted secret negotiations with Iran to secure the prisoner deal. REUTERS

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Arctic islands seek to charm visitors

A Norwegian chain of Arctic islands is seeking to turn numbing cold and total winter darkness into a draw for visitors who usually only venture north for the midnight sun during fleeting summers.

Ny-Alesund, Norway GETTY IMAGES

The focus on winter in the Svalbard archipelago, 750 miles from the North Pole, is part of a drive to attract tourism and environmental research to diversify the economy after a century of dependence on now-failing coal mines.

"We're advertising the exotic side of being in the dark," said Arild Olsen, mayor of Longyearbyen, the main settlement with 2,200 inhabitants. Its winter temperatures are around 14 degrees Fahrenheit.

Winter tourism can include night-time dogsled rides, visits to ice caves or cross-country skiing, with guns to protect against polar bears. And the northern lights — flickering colors in the sky generated by charged particles from the sun — are only visible in the dark.

Norway mothballed the main coal mine on Svalbard last year, which had been due to produce 1.9 million tons a year until 2019, after mounting losses. The right-wing government will issue a plan to parliament this spring about the long-term future of the islands.

"Research is definitely part of the solution" for Svalbard, said Unni Steinsmo, head of the board of Kings Bay AS, which runs Ny-Alesund, the world's most northerly permanent nonmilitary settlement.

Ice has been receding fast in the Arctic because of climate change. In Ny-Alesund, scientists from 11 nations including China, India, South Korea, Norway, Germany, France, Britain and Norway have research stations.

Steinsmo told Reuters scientists were carrying out more winter research, such studying how plants and fish adapt to the polar darkness. The fjord by Ny-Alesund has been ice-free in recent winters, making marine research easier, she said. REUTERS

Marlon Wayans doesn't hate *'Fifty Shades'*

In "Fifty Shades of Black," Marlon Wayans sends up "Fifty Shades of Grey," but also finds time to skewer "Magic Mike." OPEN ROAD FILMS

wknd

THE FUN STARTS HERE

The star and co-writer of "Fifty Shades of Black" thinks you have to sort of love something to make fun of it.

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
matt.prigge@metro.us

Marlon Wayans jokes about the reason he's always working. "My little one — this little spoiled brat — I take him to Nashville. I ask him where he wants to eat. He says, 'Let's go to Mastro's,'" he tells us, referring to the high-end eatery. "If he ever complains, 'Dad, why were you always on the road?' 'Because I had to f—ing pay for Mastro's, you little bastard!'"

Right now, the actor and performer, 43, has "Fifty Shades of Black," a send-up of the "Fifty Shades of Grey" movie. But Wayans, who co-wrote and plays the mysterious Christian Grey analog, swears it's not really a "spoof" — or at least that's not how he and his collaborators approached it.

GETTY IMAGES

I have to confess I don't hate the movie "Fifty Shades of Grey."

I don't hate it. I love-hate it. I think you have to love-hate the movie in order to make fun of it. You have to love and respect what's good about it, and you have to hate what's bad about it. You have to find out what's funny about it, and then deliver it. So I didn't hate it. It looked great. I thought some of the flirting was cute. I didn't like the sex scenes. They were pretty boring.

They're very PG-13.

They're PG. It's like a G. I could see "Kung Fu Panda" doing some of the stuff in that movie. I can see Fiona and Shrek doing something like that. [Laughs] "Come to the red room. I'll get the big whip. I'll use my tail!" "Fifty Shades of Green."

You had to watch the film a lot to make this. I imagine that's like Stockholm syndrome.

It becomes your favorite movie. You watch it over and over and over again, until you throw up in your mouth slightly. When someone mentions the movie you go [gags]. You ever have cake and it's delicious, but you get greedy and have five, six, seven slices? You start hating yourself. And then someone says, "You want some cake?" And the thought of cake makes you almost vomit in your mouth. That's what happens with these [spoof] movies.

Do you think you're even simply making fun of it?

It's not making fun of it. It's a comedic retelling. Honestly if you've never seen "Fifty Shades of Grey" you would still enjoy this movie, because of the characters and the situations. You make these movies like they're original, and you have to make the journey enjoyable whether people have seen them or not. You're doing a comedy. At the end of the day we approached it like a comedy. Not a spoof; a comedy.

...but seriously

Do you see yourself doing drama again, as you did with "Requiem for a Dream"?

I would love to, but you know, there's a line of guys to get those movies before they get to me. When I think something's good or something's for me, I'm fearless about going out and trying to get it. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. In the meantime I do comedy. I want to make people laugh or make people cry laughing. Drama, I have that skill set, I've studied Shakespeare. But it's low-hanging fruit. You do what you can do and what I feel I'm purposed to do, which is to make people laugh.

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"Kung Fu Panda 3"

Director: Jennifer Yuh Nelson, Alessandro Carloni
Voices of: Jack Black, Bryan Cranston
Rating: PG

●●●○○

Jack Black's Po finds that he has a dad, and he's voiced by Bryan Cranston, in "Kung Fu Panda 3." DREAMWORKS ANIMATION

The three "Kung Fu Panda" films are powerfully forgettable, but they're also handsomely made, extremely pretty, elegantly designed and funny exactly when they need to be. If they weren't such a smooth balance of multiple elements, or if they took themselves at all seriously, there'd be reason to complain. But you won't, in part because they'll slip out of your mind the second they end.

One can even forgive that they're cookie-cutter. Slovenly porcine panda Po (voice of Jack Black) realizes — once again — that he's actually an unstoppable martial arts god. Here he meets his long-lost dad (Bryan Cranston), who in turn introduces him to a mystery society of pandas. In more routine terms, there's another supervillain (J.K. Simmons) with a routine bid for world domination.

Who cares if this is forgettable? The colors are riots of neon green and hypnotic swirling clouds. The spirit realm is a fantastical place, free of earthly constraints, but even the "mortal world" is bright and retina-searing. It has homilies — ever-cryptic tiny panda Master Shifu (Dustin Hoffman) tells Po he's "trying to turn you into you" — but not so many that it weighs down the picture. It has a decent stretch where Po and dad act more like rascally siblings a la "Step Brothers," plus a climax on loan from "The Magnificent Seven" (or at least "Three Amigos!"). It's a fine, sturdy outing. Prepare to fire up the Wikipedia entry right before "Kung Fu Panda 4" to remind yourself you saw it at all. **MATT PRIGGE**

"The Finest Hours"

Director: Craig Gillespie
Stars: Chris Pine, Casey Affleck
Rating: PG-13

●●●○○

Casey Affleck is the most interesting part of "The Finest Hours." CLAIRE FOLGER

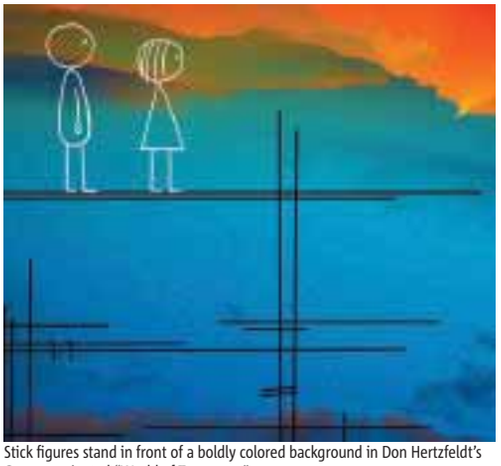
The Disney-funded "The Finest Hours" is a mixed bag — a movie that wants to be both a paean to the triumph of the human spirit but also unbearably tough and dirty. It tells of the storied, improbable rescue of two oil tankers caught up in a wicked nor'easter in 1952 off of Cape Cod. It has a corny prologue, people screeching things like "Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" and "Not on my watch!"

On the other hand, it's about the process of problem-solving, a la "Apollo 13" and "The Martian." It even goes light on sentimentality and weepy moments. After all, its characters are too busy with the grunt work of survival to worry about whether viewers are getting much in the way of feels.

Scenes of crazy plans being hatched are the best parts of "The Finest Hours," in part because they give us Casey Affleck. A technician and resident brainiac, his Ray is not just the crews' savior but is played by the only performer doing anything interesting. Introspective and prone to mumbling, the still superior Affleck helps occasionally ground a movie that's all over the place. **MP**

The Oscar-nominated shorts

Need a leg up on your Oscars pool? Try taking in the 10 shorts nominated for the animated and live action categories at this year's Academy Awards, which will air Feb. 28.



Stick figures stand in front of a boldly colored background in Don Hertzfeldt's Oscar-nominated "World of Tomorrow." WORLD OF TOMORROW

A little girl winds up with her troubled father in the German/Austrian "Everything Will Be Okay." EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY

Animated shorts

Let's cut to the chase: The title that should win this Oscar is "World of Tomorrow," Don Hertzfeldt's wildly clever rhapsody for a very grim future indeed. Equal parts bottomlessly depressing and laugh-out-loud hilarious, it's also gorgeous, even though it's nothing but stick figures yapping in front of bold colors.

No other short comes close, though it would be fine if the trophy went (as it likely will) to Pixar's "Sanjay's Super Team," also funny and moving (though you saw it if you saw "Inside Out").

This year's crop is a fairly heavy lot. "Bear Story," from Chile, deals with trauma; the cosmonaut-centric "We Can't Live Without Cosmos" with friendship; and Richard Williams' very bloody "Prologue" with humans' inhumanity during war.

Live-action shorts

The animation wing of the Oscars favors versatility and expression. The live-action portion prefers a specific type of film: maudlin tales, usually with a twist. The Kosovo drama "Shok" is the most typical of these (read: Mark it on your Oscar party ballot).

More noble is the Palestinian "Ave Maria"; more thumb-twiddling is the war-zone-set "Day One." The English "Stutterer" is at least a good calling card for its director.

Some years these wan entries are all we get. Occasionally there's a treat. This year it's the quietly intense "Everything Will Be Okay," an exacting look at a man trying to spirit his daughter away from his ex. **MATT PRIGGE**

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Cindy Barshop is helping women take charge of their sexual health

The outspoken "Real Housewives of New York City" alum is tackling taboo topics once again.

JAMIE PRIMEAU
@MetroNewYork
letters@metro.us

If there's one thing "Real Housewives of New York City" fans know, it's that Cindy Barshop isn't afraid to speak her mind. The native New Yorker, who appeared on the show's fourth season, is now the founder of VSPOT MediSpa.

Located on the Upper East Side, VSPOT offers an FDA-approved, nonsurgical solution to the vaginal loosening, dryness and incontinence that women experience with age, after childbirth or during menopause, symptoms affecting approximately three in four women.

"I always go after taboo subjects because those are the things that women don't talk about that affect their everyday lives," Barshop says.

So, what sparked this idea? "I found out about a new technology in Europe and I was like, 'Oh my god,'" she recalls, referencing the laser treatment. As soon as it came to New York, she traveled two-and-a-half hours to try it, and afterward decided to buy a machine.

This isn't the "RHONY" alum's first business endeavor. Barshop started Completely Bare, a laser hair removal and waxing spa chain, which has since been sold and rebranded.

"Coming to VSPOT will change your life," Cindy Barshop says of her newest business venture. GETTY IMAGES

How it works

This quick, painless procedure is performed by a doctor with a fractional CO2 laser inside the vaginal canal. "It sounds scary, but [this kind of laser] is used on your face all the time," Barshop explains, comparing the experience to a facial.

Reportedly the feeling is comparable to a pap smear and the benefits are many, according to Barshop, who says, "It makes the tissue healthier, younger, increases blood flow and increases collagen."

Why it's worth it

Not only does the tissue become healthier, but this procedure increases desire and sexual satisfaction. Other aspects improved by the VSPOT procedure include lubrication, tightness and stress incontinence — in other words, urinary leakage.

Looking ahead

When asked how this ties into her "Real Housewives" background, she says, "Some of my friends have come in. Maybe I'll be on the show treating [them]!" Talk about full circle.

If anyone is blushing at the thought of visiting VSPOT, Barshop says this: "It's not embarrassing. People talk about Viagra all the time. We don't need to take a pill. This is natural. ... Coming to [VSPOT] will change your life," she promises. "It's empowering to take control of your sexual health and everyday life."

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Charlie Puth wrote most of 'Nine Track Mind' from his lawyer's house

Charlie Puth is a very productive roommate. CATIE LAFFOON

And that's nothing compared to what he and Selena Gomez did in the closet.

RACHEL RACZKA
@rachelraczka
rachel.raczka@metro.us

Charlie Puth knows exactly what he'd like to wear to this year's Grammy Awards. The 24-year-old singer-songwriter is up for three awards for his "Fast & Furious 7" single, "See You Again" with Wiz Khalifa, and he'd love to wear a dark green Saint Laurent suit. But don't ask him what he plans to say if he wins.

"I don't want to jinx it," he says. "I just have a couple bullet points. I'll thank Wiz, first and foremost, and I'll thank Paul [Walker] and Vin Diesel for including me in the film, and my mom."

Puth's Meghan Trainor duet "Marvin Gaye" — a cleverly coquettish hook that uses the soul singer's name as a verb — and followups ("One Call Away," "Nothing But Trouble" with Lil Wayne) teased what type of album might be expected from the Berklee grad, but it was not until today that we knew for sure. We caught up with Puth from Washington, D.C., where he's on a rigorous promo schedule ahead of the release of his long-awaited studio debut, "Nine Track Mind," from Atlantic.

Where were you when you found out about the Grammy nominations?
I was coming back from London, in the air with no Wi-Fi, and then immediately got a sea of texts. Like 600 of them, saying congratulations. It was totally surreal.

I've read that you're a self-proclaimed "music nerd," but what do you really like to geek out to?
I love pretty much everything, but I like to break down the production in music. I like to listen really closely to try to figure out what type of reverb is on John Mayer's "Clarity," or I like to breakdown the chord structures of songs.

Where did you write this album?
This is going to sound really strange, but I spent most of the time writing in my lawyer's house. I had to move out of my apartment because I simply didn't want to live there anymore, and my lawyer and I are really good friends and it's convenient that he's also an awesome attorney. I had a writing session in an AirBnB and it was on a cliff, and I just didn't like the vibe. I got freaked out. So I went to his house and had a writing session and didn't leave for like six months. I did the whole album there.

You're like the roommate that never leaves.
I literally had Selena Gomez come over and record in one of the closets because we didn't have a vocal booth set up.

How were the acoustics?
It was good. We just had to put in a lot sweaters to diminish the reverb.

How did "We Don't Talk Anymore" come to be?
I met Selena at an after party after the MTV Video Music Awards and we were talking about something and in the back of my head, I was thinking, 'I'd like to do a song with her some day.' She has a really cool voice and I think our voices complement each other really well. I didn't think this was going to be the song for her, or for me.

As for lyrical sentiment, I think it fits so well for her to be on [the song] because everyone knows what she went through. And I think everyone has had those relationships where you're obsessed with that one person, but then you break it off peacefully, but it's changed. You can't talk to them like friends anymore. You can say you want to remain friends, but it's easier said than done. It's heartbreaking. "We Don't Talk Anymore" is basically the conversation a month after that type of breakup.

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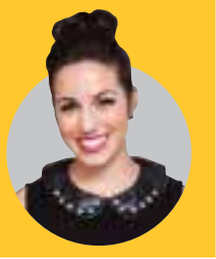
3 Dating apps if you're over Tinder

LAURIE DAVIS

Single and Swiping

Laurie Davis is the founder of eFlirt, an online dating concierge service, and the best-selling author of "Love @ First Click: The Ultimate Guide to Online Dating."



There's a dating app out there for you. ISTOCK

No app is perfect. As a digital dating expert, I hear all the gripes. "My matches on Tinder are lame," one client told me. Another said, "I match with a lot of people, but no one writes me back."

If you're stuck on swiping, it could be that the app you're on isn't your perfect match. Here are the three biggest complaints I hear, and three expert-approved apps to quiet your grumblings.

Problem: You're getting a million messages, but they're not from the right matches, and the ones you do like never respond or meet up.
Solution: Bumble puts women in control — they make the first move. Because of this, the quality of matches and conversation on Bumble is much higher than the average app. My female clients love that they're not bombarded with cheesy pickup lines, while my male clients appreciate that they don't have to come up with a witty opener. This app also wins the unofficial award for hottest guys — at least as far as today's swipes go.

Problem: You're going on dates, but they're all lame.
Solution: Coffee Meets Bagel lets you filter matches by your deal breakers, like height and religion, so the quality of potential dates is instantly higher. It also helps you avoid decision overload by giving you only one match each day. You can pay for a few more if you want, but you won't be swiping endlessly.

Problem: You dream of meeting someone through friends, like in your favorite rom-com.
Solution: Hinge feels like one big cocktail party because it only matches you with friends of friends. There's more social accountability because you and your match have someone in common and could get the inside scoop on the other if needed. Also, matches are timed. You have 14 days to get offline for a date, meaning you can't endlessly message each other on the app without meeting.

Brock Nelson has registered 19 goals and 29 points so far this season. GETTY IMAGES

Grades are in for Islanders

The 25-16-6 Isles are flying high and score quite well in our midseason report card.

ROBERT CRISCOLA
@ItsGood2BeKing
sports@metro.us

The Islanders' young core has positioned the team for its first back-to-back playoff appearances since the 2001-02 and 2002-03 seasons. Let's take a look at what aspects of the game the Isles are excelling at and which could use improvement.

B+

Forwards

The Islanders average 2.70 goals per game, which is the eighth-best mark in the NHL. They are led in the scoring department by Brock Nelson (19 goals, 29 points), John Tavares (16 goals, 34 points), Frans Nielsen (14 goals, 30 points) and Kyle Okposo (12 goals, 35 points), and these four lead all forwards on the club in average TOI. Checking-line stalwart Cal Clutterbuck has made the most of his opportunities this season, adding 10 goals to the cause on just 46 shots.

B

Defensemen

The Islanders' blue-liners give up their fair share of shots (30.2 per game, only 12th-best in the league), but they are very careful with the puck. Calvin de Haan has the most giveaways among Isles defensemen (32), but that mark is only 64th-worst among all NHL skaters. No other Isles defenseman ranks in the top 100 in that category. Only Nick Leddy has a negative plus/minus rating (minus-11), but he makes up for it by contributing the most points on the club among defenseman (18).

A

Coaching

Jack Capuano has done a great job managing this young team, and he gets them to respond when the going gets tough. Such was the case on Monday, when the Isles came out sluggish and fell behind to the Red Wings, 1-0. Capuano decided to rearrange the lines midway through the contest and it paid off, as Tavares found Nelson for the Islanders' first tally of the contest.

B+

Goaltending

Jaroslav Halak and Thomas Greiss have both been solid between the pipes for the Isles this season. Halak has a 2.14 GAA and a .923 save percentage in 26 starts, while Greiss has a 2.32 GAA and a .927 save percentage in 21 starts. But there is no goaltender controversy, as Greiss has struggled lately; he put up a 3.00 GAA while filling in for an injured Halak for five straight games from Dec. 27 through Jan. 3.

'Dubs' invade MSG

Stephen Curry and the Golden State Warriors will make their one and only appearance this season at Madison Square Garden when they take on the Knicks on Sunday (7:30 p.m., MSG). Golden State owns a phenomenal 42-4 record so far this season. GETTY IMAGES

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NOTICE OF FORMATION of Living Quirky LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secy. of State of New York (SSNY) on January 8, 2016. Office location: New York County. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Christina Salerno c/o Living Quirky LLC, 244 Fifth Ave., Suite 2121, New York, NY 10001. Purpose: any lawful activity.

UDI Career Training Institute, 78-14 Roosevelt Ave. Suite 211 Jackson Heights, NY 11372 is applying to become a candidate for accreditation with the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education. Persons wishing to make comments should either write to the Executive Director of the Commission, Council on Occupational Education, 7840 Roswell Road, Bldg. 300, Suite 325, Atlanta, GA 30350, or submit comments on the Council's website (www.council.org). Persons making comments must provide their names and mailing addresses.

SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF QUEENS

CITIMORTGAGE, INC., Plaintiff -against- TEEPU KHAN, et al Defendant(s). Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered herein and dated August 13, 2015, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Queens County Supreme Courthouse 88-11 Sutphin Blvd in Courtroom #25, Jamaica NY on February 19, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. premises situate, lying and being in the Borough and County of Queens, City and State of New York, being more particularly bounded and described as follows: BEGINNING at a point on the northerly side of Lockwood Court, distant 365.00 feet westerly from the corner formed by the intersection of the northerly side of Lockwood Court with the westerly side of 104th Street; being a plot of 27.50 feet by 80 feet by 27.5 feet by 80.00 feet.

Said premises known as 102-07 LOCKWOOD COURT, HOWARD BEACH, NY Approximate amount of lien $ 566,930.08 plus interest & costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment and Terms of Sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. Index Number 13550/2010.

DIANA C. GIANTURCO, ESQ., Referee Sweeney Gallo Reich & Bolz, LLP Attorney(s) for Plaintiff 95-25 Queens Blvd, 11th Floor, Rego Park, NY, 11374

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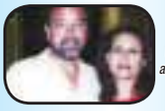

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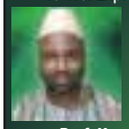

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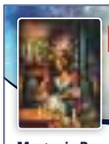

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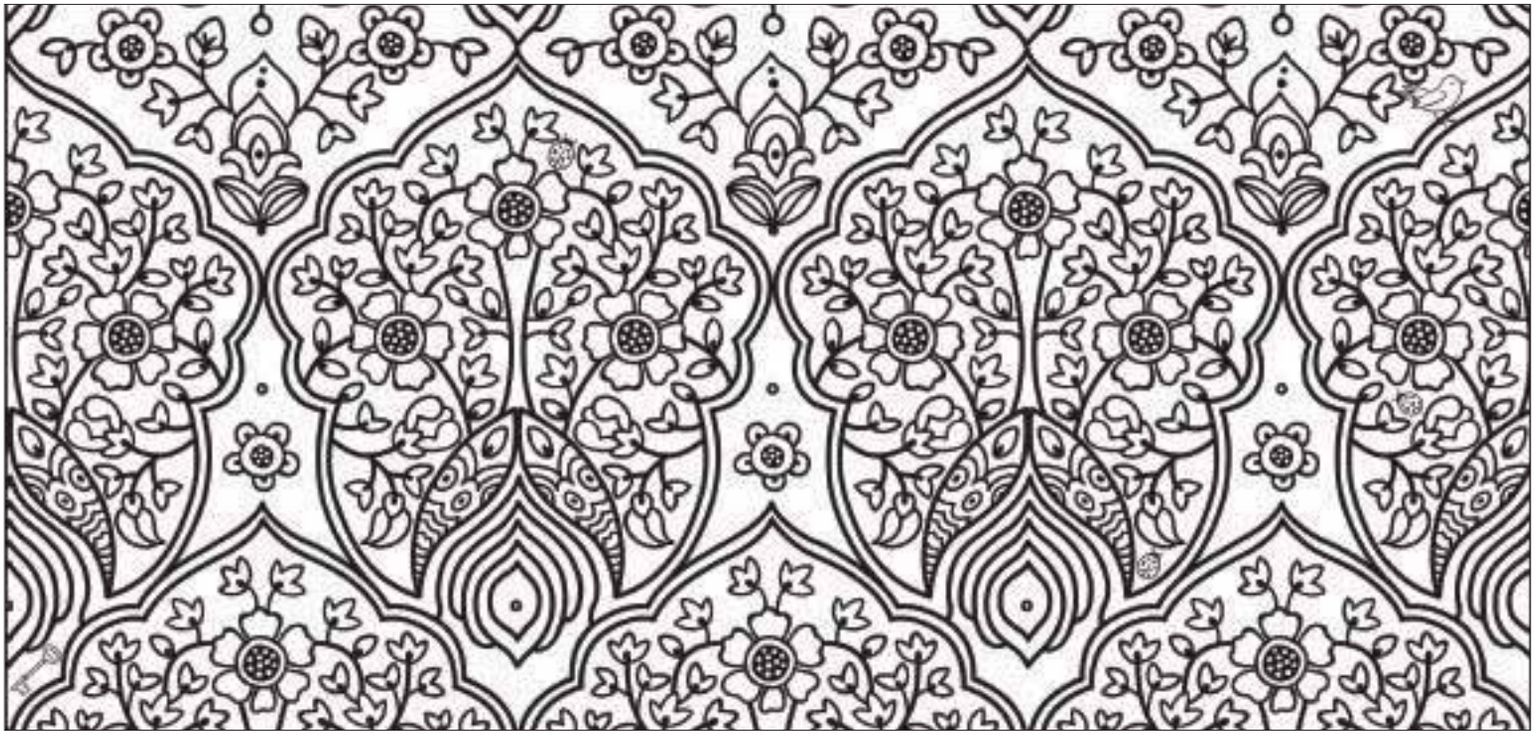

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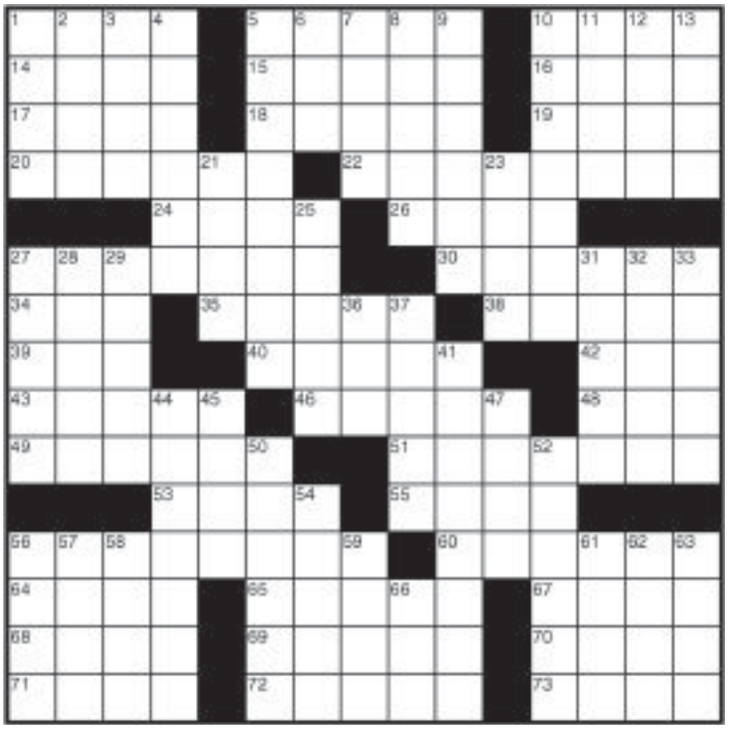

Across

1 Bagpiper's wear
5 Jalopy
10 Weight rebate
14 Orchid-like flower
15 Tangy taste
16 Magnets attract it
17 Cummerbund
18 — -garde
19 Canyon reply
20 Land mollusks
22 Astronomer who discovered Uranus
24 Gridiron shouts
26 Arlene of old films
27 Air passage
30 Christie sleuth
34 Emma in "The Avengers"
35 Hang of it
38 "Tosca," e.g.
39 Dock denizen
40 Lamb sandwiches
42 Roman gods
43 Pile of papers
46 Heap
48 Over there
49 Canvas supports
51 Gaudiest
53 Police bust
55 Oversized hairdo
56 Conferred a dukedom
60 What "ipso" means
64 Auto import
65 Quebec school
67 Rink leap
68 Chevalier's theme song
69 Best-seller, maybe
70 Kind of pool
71 Mo. expense
72 Tire surface
73 Is, in Madrid

Down

1 Smooch
2 Persia, nowadays
3 Elvis' daughter
4 Casual top (hyph.)
5 Playing the cymbals
6 Gun the engine
7 Far East nanny
8 Firmed up
9 Snare
10 Gift for Dad (2 wds.)
11 Curved entrance
12 Architect Mies van der —
13 Ascorbic acid, for one
21 Harmless prank
23 Scram!
25 Dispatches
27 Sip very slowly
28 Old cattle town
29 Fills to the gills
31 Change colors
32 Sandwich cookies
33 Go bad, as meat
36 PC monitor
37 Qantas mascot
41 Jazz-rock guitarist John
44 Kind of exercise
45 "Spare tire"
47 Mr. Vonnegut
50 Hushed
52 Two tablets, say
54 Wallpaper, etc.
56 Salinger girl
57 Wield a hammer
58 Appoint
59 Went headlong
61 Alimony getters
62 Mardi Gras follower
63 Kitty's bane
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easy

4				5		1		
		1	2		7		9	
	7				4		8	
	6	7	1	9				
			5	8	6			
				7	3	5	1	
	1		8				2	
	2		7		9	6		
		5		2				3

hard

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	1						5	
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1				4				3
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5	3		6	9			4	7

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Make the most of your day. Get personal matters in order and tidy up unfinished business. Don't let an emotional incident lead to an avoidable conflict.

Taurus If you look for opportunity, you will find it. It's up to you to make things happen and to speak up if you want something. Share your thoughts and feelings.

Gemini Nothing will stand in your way if you are honest about what you want. A couple of personal changes will help improve an important partnership.

Cancer Don't get caught up in someone else's emotional problems. Put your time and effort into a project that highlights your skills and attributes. Be affectionate and supportive.

Leo Get serious about who you are and who you want to be. You can make positive changes if you recognize what you really want to accomplish. Don't be afraid to go it alone.

Virgo Enjoy spending time with people you don't often get to see. A move in a creative direction will tempt you. Fond memories will prompt you to get in touch with old friends.

Libra Embrace new possibilities instead of walking away from the change they will bring. It's time to let go of whatever isn't working for you so that you can make positive gains.

Scorpio Work alone if it makes more sense to you. The aim is to raise your profile by taking credit for a job well done. For once, put your needs first.

Sagittarius Don't blurt out what you want or how you feel. Diplomacy is encouraged if you want to avoid opposition. Keep your plans simple and practical.

Capricorn Home improvements may cause emotional duress, but in the end they will bring you great joy. A romantic relationship will prosper due to the personal changes you make.

Aquarius You will impress people with your enthusiasm if you concentrate on getting things done, instead of complaining about what remains to be accomplished.

Pisces Visit someone you like or a place that inspires you. Communication and action will bring the results you are looking for. Romance will improve your life. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

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